

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EA-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 RSR-01 /160 W

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R 131917Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4868

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

CINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 2164

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, UY

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER'S VIEWS ON CURRENT SITUATION

CINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: MONTEVIDEO 2148

1. ON JULY 11, MINISTER OF DEFENSE WALTER RAVENNA ASKED ME TO COME IN TO DISCUSS A HOSPITAL SUPPLIES PROBLEM IN WHICH HE IS PERSONALLY INTERESTED (SEE SEPTELS). RAVENNA, WHO IS ONE OF LEADING CIVILIAN FIGURES OF THE GOU, TOOK THE OCCASION FOR A LUCID EXPOSITION OF THE BORDABERRY ADMINISTRATION'S GOALS AND TACTICS. HE SPOKE WITH GREAT CONVICTION. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONVERSATION FOLLOW:

2. DEFMIN SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE U.S. TO UNDERSTAND PRECISELY WHAT WAS GOING ON IN URUGUAY AND WHAT ISSUES WERE AT STAKE. HE SAID THERE CURRENTLY EXISTED A "STATE OF WAR OVER THE FUTURE OF URUGUAY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT". AT
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ISSUE WAS WHETHER OR NOT URUGUAY WOULD BE ABLE TO DEVELOP

ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY OR WOULD BE CONDEMNED TO CONTINUED STAGNATION AND ULTIMATE RUIN. HE SAID URUGUAY'S SITUATION WAS NOT LIKE VIET NAM ALTHOUGH THE "WAR" WAS AGAINST MARXIST SUBVERSION. AS A LONG-TIME FRIEND OF THE US, HE SINCERELY BELIEVED THAT THE OUTCOME WAS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO THE US INTERESTS IN THE SOUTHERN CONE OF SOUTH AMERICA. URUGUAY WOULD REMAIN AN OUTPOST OF DEMOCRACY WHICH, IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN CHILE AND ARGENTINA, WAS A FACTOR OF IMPORTANCE. SPEAKING WITH FEELING, RAVENNA SAID THAT PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE ARMED FORCES, WAS DETERMINED TO UPROOT THE MARXIST INFILTRATION OF URUGUAYAN SOCIETY WHICH HAD DONE SUCH ENORMOUS DAMAGE TO THE COUNTRY. THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK POSSIBLE; THERE WOULD BE NO MEDIATION OR NEGOTIATION. A SET OF PRIORITY GOALS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED, STARTING WITH LABOR, AND EVENTUALLY TO ENCOMPASS THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR. THESE GOALS WOULD BE ACHIEVED AT A CONTROLLED PACE AND PRESIDENT BORDABERRY SETS THE PACE. THE PRESIDENT WAS PERSONALLY COMMITTED TO THIS GREAT NATIONAL STRUGGLE AND KNEW HE HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF URUGUAYANS.

3. RAVENNA SAID STRIKE REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS OF DISTURBANCES WERE GREATLY EXAGGERATED. THE INTERIOR WAS PRACTICALLY 100 PERCENT NORMAL AND FULLY SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS. IN MONTEVIDEO THE CENTER OF MARXISTS PENETRATION THE GOVERNMENT'S TACTICS WERE SLOWLY BUT SURELY BREAKING THE POWER OF THE EXTREME LEFTIST LABOR LEADERS AND THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PREVAIL. RAVENNA SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT MANY OF THE MARXIST LEADERS WERE MAOISTS AND FURTHER TO THE LEFT THAN COMMUNISTS.

4. THE PRINCIPAL GOAL OF THE DIFFICULT TASK UNDERTAKEN BY THE MILITARY WAS TO CREATE IN URUGUAY A CLIMATE IN WHICH CAPITAL COULD BE FORMED AND INVESTMENTS MADE, JOBS CREATED AND OPPORTUNITIES OPENED UP. FOREIGN INVESTMENT WOULD BE WELCOMED UNDER SET RULES. DRASTIC MEASURES WERE REQUIRED IF THIS GOAL IS TO BE ACHIEVED.

5. RAVENNA SAID US COMPREHENSION OF THE STAKES IN PLAY AND THE GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED WAS VERY IMPORTANT AND HE WAS SURE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY WAS SO ADVISING THE USG.

6. I ASKED DR. RAVENNA WHERE THE ACTIONS AGAINST THE OPPOSITION BLANCO PARTY FIT INTO THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION HE HAD JUST GIVEN ME. HE REPLIED THAT THE BLANCOS WERE BALDY SPLIT, THAT ONE FACTION HAD GONE SO FAR AS TO FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH THE "FRENTE AMPLIO" BUT THAT A MAJORITY OF THE BLANCO PARTY MEMBERS WHO COULD NOT SOMACH SUCH AN ALLIANCE

WERE JOINING THE ETCHEGOYAN FACTION WHICH WAS SUPPORTING PRESIDENT BORDABERRY. HE SAID THE DEMOCRATIC SENSIBILITIES OF MANY URUGUAYANS WERE AFFECTED BY DRASTIC MEASURES THAT HAD HAD TO BE TAKEN BUT THAT THERE HAD BEEN A GENERAL RALLYING TO THE GOVERNMENT.

7. COMMENT: RAVENNA IS ONE OF THE BEST FRIENDS THE US HAS IN URUGUAY. HE IS A STRAIGHT-TALKING, SINCERE MAN WHO HAS A DISTINGUISHED RECORD OF PUBLIC SERVICE. I WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN THE COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY ON THE MILITARY. HIS BALANCED VIEWS, SOPHISTICATION AND GOOD JUDGMENT ARE IMPORTANT QUALITIES AT THIS TIME. I REPORT HSI VIEWS AS I CONSIDER THEM TO BE A GOOD STATEMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S GOALS AND ACTIONS AS HE CONCEIVE THEM TO BE.
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